

Judge Richard A. Jones

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Plaintiff,
vs.
SCHULYER P. BARBEAU
Defendant.

) NO. CR15-391RAJ
)
) DEFENDANT'S MOTION
) REGARDING JUSTIFICATION
) DEFENSE INSTRUCTIONS AT TRIAL
)
) **Note for: March 4, 2016**
) **EVIDENTIARY HEARING REQUESTED**
)

The defendant, Schulyer Barbeau, through counsel, Assistant Federal Public Defender Dennis Carroll, submits this Motion and Declaration in support of his request that the fact-finder be given instructions regarding justification (i.e. defense of self and others) at trial.

I. Procedural History.

On December 16, 2015, Mr. Barbeau was indicted on one count of Possession of an Unregistered Firearm (a short barreled rifle), in violation of 26 U.S.C. §§ 5861(d) and 5845(a)(3). The Government has informed defense counsel that it plans to seek a superseding indictment charging Mr. Barbeau with an additional offense, Possession of a Machine Gun, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(o). Both counts will be addressed herein. Trial is currently scheduled for May 2, 2016.

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1 **II. Factual Background.**

2 Federal agents received information from a confidential source that Mr. Barbeau
 3 owned a short barreled rifle. Mr. Barbeau gave the rifle to the confidential source so the
 4 source could sell it. Agents obtained the rifle from the confidential source and verified
 5 that it is an unregistered, fully automatic, short barreled rifle.

6 Mr. Barbeau is not a felon. In fact, he has no prior criminal convictions. He is
 7 not a drug user, nor has he been adjudicated as mentally ill. Indeed, he served four years
 8 in the United States Marine Corps, after which he was honorably discharged. He then
 9 served four years in the National Guard.

10 There is no dispute that Mr. Barbeau knowingly possessed the above firearm or
 11 that he was aware of its basic characteristics (short barreled rifle and fully automatic).

12 Mr. Barbeau submits the attached declarations in support of his request for jury
 13 instructions regarding a justification defense. *See Exhibit 1 (Declaration of Mr.*
 14 *Barbeau) and Exhibit 2 (Declaration of Allen Aenk).* These declarations set forth the
 15 reasons that Mr. Barbeau believed that he was under an unlawful and present threat of
 16 death or serious bodily injury, that he did not recklessly place himself in such a
 17 situation, that he had no reasonable legal alternative, and that he possessed the firearm
 18 to protect himself and others from the threatened harm. If the Court determines that
 19 these declarations are insufficient to present a justification defense at trial, Mr. Barbeau
 20 requests an evidentiary hearing prior to trial to supplement the record.¹

21 In his declaration, Mr. Barbeau explains the reasons why he possessed this
 22 particular type of firearm. A fully automatic, short barreled rifle provides the necessary
 23 maneuverability and firepower to meet the threats that he, and most citizens, face in this
 24 country. Exhibit 1. These threats come from criminals, terrorists, foreign forces, and

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 26¹ Mr. Barbeau intends to present the same type of information in support of his motion to
 dismiss based on the Second Amendment which will be filed separately from this motion.

1 sometimes domestic authorities. *Id.* All of these threats are comprised of individuals
 2 who have access to powerful weapons. *Id.* In order to effectively defend himself and
 3 others, Mr. Barbeau reasonably believed that a fully automatic, short barreled rifle was
 4 necessary. *Id.*

5 Mr. Barbeau asks that this issue be heard in advance of the actual trial. If the
 6 Court determines that his offer of proof is insufficient to warrant a necessity defense
 7 and also denies Mr. Barbeau's other pretrial motions, then he will likely request a
 8 stipulated facts trial in order to preserve his issues for appeal.

9 **III. Based on his proffer, this Court should find that Mr. Barbeau is**
 10 **entitled to present a justification defense at trial.**

11 In *Heller*, the Supreme Court explained the Second Amendment safeguards the
 12 "inherent right to self-defense" by protecting from undue government interference the
 13 right of citizens to protect themselves, their abodes, and their property—"to use arms in
 14 the defense of hearth and home." *Id.* at 652, 679. While acknowledging that rights
 15 secured by the Second Amendment are not unlimited, the *Heller* Court stressed that
 16 government restrictions on the right to possess firearms are especially suspect when
 17 applied to "the home, where the need for defense of self, family, and property is most
 18 acute." *Id.* at 628.

19 A criminal defendant has the right to have a jury resolve disputed factual issues.
 20 *United States v. Dorrell*, 758 F.2d 427, 430 (9th Cir.1985). A defendant is entitled to
 21 "instructions relating to a theory of defense for which there is any foundation in the
 22 evidence, even though the evidence may be weak, insufficient, inconsistent, or of
 23 doubtful credibility." *United States v. Lemon*, 824 F.2d 763, 764 (9th Cir.1987).

24 A justification defense is available in firearm possession cases. *See United States*
 25 *v. Wofford*, 122 F.3d 787, 790 (9th Cir. 1997); *United States v. Nolan*, 700 F.2d 479
 26 (9th Cir. 1983). Before a justification defense can be considered, the defendant must

1 demonstrate some evidence of the following elements: (1) he was under unlawful and
 2 present threat of death or serious bodily injury; (2) he did not recklessly place himself
 3 in a situation where he would be forced to engage in criminal conduct; (3) he had no
 4 reasonable legal alternative; and (4) there was a direct causal relationship between the
 5 criminal action and the avoidance of the threatened harm. *See Wofford*, 122 F.3d at
 6 790.²

7 Mr. Barbeau's declaration (Exhibit 1) and the supporting declaration of Allen
 8 Aenk (Exhibit 2) provide sufficient evidence that Mr. Barbeau and the Aenk family
 9 were under a present threat of death or serious bodily injury. The Aenks had received
 10 threats against their lives and were the victims of a recent crime. Even apart from the
 11 specific situation faced by the Aenk family, Mr. Barbeau had a reasonable belief that he
 12 faced threats from multiple groups. Those threats (criminals, terrorists, etc.) alone
 13 justify his actions in this case.

14 Mr. Barbeau did not recklessly place himself in a situation where he would be
 15 forced to engage in criminal conduct. Mr. Barbeau, a trained Marine, was asked to
 16 assist friends. Just like any good Samaritan who comes to the aid of others, he should
 17 be allowed to pursue means to protect himself and others.

18 Mr. Barbeau did not have a reasonable legal alternative. As noted above, Mr.
 19 Barbeau should not be required to show that he had no reasonable legal alternative.
 20 Nonetheless, as outlined in his declaration, other types of firearms, which are not
 21 prohibited, would not have been sufficiently maneuverable in close quarters, nor would

23 ² Although Mr. Barbeau believes the evidence would satisfy these elements, he also asserts that
 24 these elements do not sufficiently honor the important liberty interest which the Second
 25 Amendment seeks to protect. Specifically, he should not be required to show that he had no
 26 reasonable legal alternative. The Second Amendment enshrines the rights of citizens to protect
 themselves and others. Citizens should not be required to pursue all other reasonable
 alternatives before possessing a firearm with sufficient capability to protect themselves from
 threats of harm.

1 they have sufficient firepower to provide an adequate defense against the threats faced
2 by Mr. Barbeau and the Aenks.

3 Finally, there was a direct causal relationship between Mr. Barbeau's criminal
4 action (possession of the firearm) and the avoidance of the threatened harm. Mr.
5 Barbeau procured this firearm specifically to address the threats that he, the Aenks, and
6 citizens in general face in today's society.

7 **IV. CONCLUSION.**

8 For the reasons outlined above, Mr. Barbeau asks this Court for a pretrial ruling
9 granting his request that he be allowed to present a justification defense at trial with
10 corresponding jury instructions supporting the defense.

11 DATED this 23rd day of February, 2016.

12 Respectfully submitted,

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14 s/ Dennis Carroll
15 Dennis Carroll
16 Assistant Federal Public Defender
Attorney for Schuler Barbeau
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the date below, I filed the foregoing Defendant's Motion
Re: Justification Defense Instructions at Trial with the Clerk of the Court using the
CM/ECF system, which will send notification of filing to all parties of record.

DATED this 23rd day of February, 2016.

s/ *Kathleen Gilkey*
Kathleen Gilkey, Paralegal